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Promotion and protection of human rights: human rights questions, including alternative approaches for improving the effective enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms

Draft programme of activities for the International Year for People of African Descent

Report of the Secretary-General

Addendum

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III. Views and recommendations received from Member States

Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela

[Original: Spanish]
[6 August 2010]

The Presidential Commission for the Prevention and Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination intends to carry out the following as part of its activities for the International Year for People of African Descent:

A. Dissemination of information and publications

It is estimated that eight publications, four radio reports, four television reports and 1,500 posters regarding the issue will be produced. Two thousand calendars on Afro-Venezuelan and indigenous culture will be distributed at municipal and national levels. Three pedagogical kits on the topic of African descent will also be produced in order to promote and highlight the intercultural issue and demonstrate the contribution that Afro-Venezuelan communities have made in the formation of the country.

B. Outreach

Fifteen visits will be undertaken to the country's "education zones", in order to conduct research and educate the population, providing students and teachers with the necessary elements to eradicate discriminatory practices and with information about cultural diversity and intercultural exchange, focusing on people of African descent.

C. Training

Training sessions will be held for students, teachers and the community in general, including 10 workshops in 14 of the country's states and will be aimed at developing a national programme for the "individual and social recognition" of ethnic and racial groups and society in general. Two events will be held to promote and create awareness of the inclusion of people of African descent in the 2011 population census. Three events will be held on significant dates to promote the cultural diversity of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela and non-discrimination. There will also be photography exhibits and cinema and video forums on promoting cultural diversity and non-discrimination.

D. Research

In order to advance understanding of the issue, ethnic education research programmes will be promoted in 12 of the country's states, with the assistance of local intellectuals.

E. Event with researchers

In order to strengthen intercultural dialogue, a national event will be held with Afro-Venezuelan and indigenous researchers, in the context of the International Year for People of African Descent.

The Presidential Commission for the Prevention and Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination and Other Discrimination in the Education System informs that the activities will be held jointly with civil society organizations involved in the issue of people of African descent, and that the aim of the activities is to raise awareness of and promote the historical, political, social and cultural contributions of people of African descent to building Venezuelan society.

It is worth noting that other institutions involved in the issue of people of African descent may also be planning to carry out commemorative events, in which case it would be possible to organize joint activities with them.

Colombia

[Original: Spanish]
[11 May 2010]

A. Objectives

First, given the scope and content of the resolution entitled "International Year for People of African Descent", it is suggested that the following objectives be taken into consideration for a proposed plan of action:

(a) The strengthening of cooperation for the benefit of people of African descent for the full enjoyment of their economic, cultural, social, civil and political rights;

(b) The promotion of their participation and integration in all political, economic, social and cultural aspects of society;

(c) The promotion of a greater understanding of and respect for their diverse heritage and culture.

On the basis of the proposed objectives, a number of initiatives are set out below that involve States, the United Nations system and other intergovernmental organizations, non-governmental organizations and the private sector.

It would be appropriate to take a reference snapshot of the situation of people of African descent throughout the world to identify the fundamental and priority problems, beginning with the relevant documents issued by the United Nations. The study would allow the implementation of actions that would have the greatest impact for people of African descent.

B. Recognition of the contribution of people of African descent to nation-building

Taking into account the relevance of reconstructing historic memory as an exercise to guarantee the legitimacy of people of African descendent with regard to their rights, and to recognize their contribution to nation-building, it is proposed that:

(a) A large-scale event be promoted with the participation of Africa, Europe and the Americas, including people of African descent and their organizations, to recognize their dynamics throughout history and the contribution they make today. It would also serve to promote the sharing of cultural experiences, ancestral and organizational knowledge and create intercultural dialogue;

(b) Research be conducted and meetings arranged between academia, civil society and Governments, to discuss problems concerning the identity and rights of people of African descent, while taking into account migratory dynamics.

C. Reaffirmation and adoption of the concepts of ethnicity, identity and citizenship

With regard to the reaffirmation and adoption of concepts concerning ethnicity, identity and citizenship and their relation to nation-building processes in the framework of dialogue between States and civil society, it is suggested that:

(a) A human rights perspective on development be promoted in the United Nations system and in other international organizations;

(b) The identification of the ethnic variable regarding people of African descent be promoted in order to demonstrate their particular demographic dynamics, making it possible to define and characterize groups by type, taking into account particularities, differences and similarities, thus enabling classifications to be made and tools and processes to be used for the purposes of strengthening and developing concepts of ethnicity, identity and citizenship. In this regard, it is suggested that an international forum be held on information systems and indicators for the incorporation of the ethnic variable in the formulation of public policies, which would enable States to share their experiences concerning (i) the construction of integrated information systems; (ii) the manner in which the information is used for the design and evaluation of public policies for people of African descent; and (iii) the way in which they are involved in the design and functioning of the system;

(c) A plan for the exchange of knowledge, experiences and good practices in combating racial discrimination, particularly regarding people of African descent, be formulated, promoted and implemented, to contribute to the formulation of relevant public policies in different countries;

(d) A plan for the inclusion of people of African descent and for ethnic and racial equality be designed to serve as a model or guide for all countries;

(e) Proposals for ethnic integration and the promotion of national unity be developed;

(f) Knowledge of the contributions that people of African descent have made to nations throughout history be promoted by way of participatory and inclusive educational processes that include appreciation for and recognition of diversity and plurality.

D. Development strategies

Finally, for the creation of development strategies that recognize the political, social, economic and cultural rights of people of African descent, it is proposed that:

(a) Research be undertaken to identify the critical barriers that limit the development of people of African descent, without prejudice to regional particularities;

(b) Opportunities for the analysis of and discussion on poverty and poverty-reducing strategies be facilitated in accordance with the various perceptions and aspirations of this population;

(c) Instruments be created and strengthened for measuring the development and well-being of this population from the perspective of the effective enjoyment of rights and human development indicators;

(d) Experiences in promoting the inclusion of people of African descent at all levels of decision-making be exchanged;

(e) A plan be articulated and promoted to exchange experiences and examples of leadership for the development of people of African descent, with a view to strengthening and implementing a variety of processes regarding actions, consultation and dialogue for matters that affect them;

(f) Actions be taken aimed at recognizing interdisciplinary or multidisciplinary perspectives in social intervention processes that include the particular characteristics of the communities and cultures of people of African descent, with a differentiated approach;

(g) Grants programmes, special quotas and other possibilities for human rights education be created with the aim of providing tools that facilitate the defence and promotion of their rights;

(h) The adoption of strategies to strengthen student welfare, academic achievement, tutoring and support programmes for students of African descent be promoted in both public and private educational institutions;

(i) Institution-building and governability be promoted in territories with a population of African descent, as well as protocols for raising awareness among State functionaries;

(j) Socially responsible policies be encouraged in the private sector, as well as actions that involve people of African descent, particularly through the exchange of experiences;

(k) States be encouraged to adopt a rights-based perspective in implementing development cooperation policies and strategies that are exclusively and specifically for people of African descent;

(l) The articulation of international cooperation interventions that have not been the product of an integrated strategy but rather of isolated actions towards different sectors be promoted;

(m) Cooperation be strengthened through the exchange of knowledge and experiences related to strategies for overcoming poverty, with a differentiated perspective.

Ecuador

[Original: Spanish]
[13 August 2010]

The Secretariat for Peoples, Social Movements and Citizens Participation, in consultation with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Commerce and Integration, expresses the interest of Ecuador in holding an international event in 2011 as part of the activities planned for the International Year for People of African Descent.